

# LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

February 27, 2014

Ord, Nebraska

The February meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District was held at the Headquarters Office, 2620 Airport Drive, Ord, Nebraska, on February 27, 2014. Chairman Kruse called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

## CALL TO ORDER

### Directors in attendance

James C. Adams  
Darwin B. Anderson, Secretary  
Joseph L. Citta, Jr., Vice Chairman  
Thomas Knutson  
Clifford P. Loseke  
James C. Nelson  
Dean J. Rasmussen  
Gerald P. Smith  
Kim C. Walden

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer  
Timothy E. Bartak  
Virgil W. Gellermann  
Gary A. Kruse, Chairman  
Matt Lukasiewicz  
Alan D. Petersen  
Darwin R. Sieh  
Henry J. Thoene

### Directors absent

James J. Eschliman  
N. Richard Hadenfeldt

Michael P. Gutzmer  
Randy Kauk

### Staff in attendance

Leon "Butch" Koehlmoos, General Manager  
Irene F. Kreifels, Financial Secretary  
Richard L. Woollen, District Forester  
Cheryl K. Hornickel, Programs Assistant  
Tylr D. Naprstek, Water Modeling Coordinator

Russell G. Callan, Assistant Manager  
Rita A. Goldfish, Administrative Assistant  
Jason W. Moudry, Water Programs Specialist  
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator  
Anne Freeman, Program Secretary

### Guests in attendance

Mark Sintek, RC, NRCS, Ord

## NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING LAW POSTING

Chairman Kruse referred those in attendance to the open meeting law information posted in the Board room.

## APPROVAL OF VERIFICATION OF MEETING NOTICE, ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND EXCUSED ABSENCES

Chairman Kruse asked for verification of the meeting notice. General Manager Leon “Butch” Koehlmoos verified that the meeting notices were properly published in all newspapers. The meeting notice was also posted at the NRD Headquarters office in Ord, the NRD web site, and the eight field office locations. Koehlmoos said there were no modifications to the agenda.

**Petersen motioned, seconded by Adams, to approve the verification of the meeting notice, adopt the agenda, and excuse all absent directors. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.**

## MINUTES

Chairman Kruse asked for corrections and/or additions to the January 23, 2014, Board meeting minutes. Hearing none, Chairman Kruse ruled that the January 23, 2014, Board meeting minutes would stand approved as submitted.

## TREASURER’S REPORT

Chairman Kruse directed the Board’s attention to the Treasurer’s Report as published in the regular and supplemental agendas.

Koehlmoos highlighted expenditures to Embassy Suites for the Legislative Conference (\$6,314.00) and JEO Consulting Group for the Clear Creek-Pibel Lake Watershed Management Plan (\$4,790.00).

**Rasmussen motioned, seconded by Anderson, to approve the February, 2014, Treasurer’s Report and pay all bills. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.**

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the public, but Koehlmoos said that Duane Dilsaver of Taylor had stopped in the office to talk to him about the water situation. He said Dilsaver is against any more irrigation systems being constructed. He said that Dilsaver was going to try to attend every Board meeting to get his point across.

## FORESTER’S REPORT

District Forester Rich Woollen passed around the *Nebraska Forest Service 2013 Annual Report* and noted the forest products section which shows a picture of the Lower Loup NRD sawmill.

Woollen passed around a 2014 tree care workshop brochure and reported that there are 5 workshops scheduled. He said most of the workshops usually take place in the southern portion of Nebraska, but that one would be held in Ord on March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Lower Loup NRD headquarters.

Woollen encouraged directors to visit with representatives from small communities and invite them to attend. He said there is no registration fee for the Ord workshop.

Koehlmoos said that funds for the sponsorship of the Ord workshop would be taken out of the information & education budget. He is hoping the workshop will be well attended.

Woollen said that tree orders are still coming in. He said that there will be a feature on the NRD's new website to handle tree orders.

## NRCS REPORT

Mark Sintek, Resource Conservationist, reported that the field offices are working on their usual workload with different programs and projects. He said he has done nearly 50 HEL determinations in Valley and Sherman Counties, places where the cooperators are breaking sod to complete a pivot circle. He said there are 3 to 4 areas in each determination where sod is broken, trees are taken out and more land is being farmed, resulting in loss of habitat.

Koehlmoos said he had received word that FSA is pulling out of Fullerton and moving to Central City. He had heard that FSA had pulled back to a two-day-a-week schedule. Koehlmoos wondered if NRCS had knowledge of that and if it was going to be a trend. Sintek responded that he had heard FSA in Fullerton had moved their records, but didn't know if other FSA offices would be moving. Sintek said the FSA has experienced some budget problems.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION REPORT

### Central Region Envirothon

Information & Education Coordinator Larry Schultz reported that the Central Region Envirothon will be held March 4<sup>th</sup>. He said Lower Loup and Central Platte NRDs are co-hosting the event. He said that the District Ag Contest boundaries were changed 2 years ago which resulted in Lower Loup's contest in Columbus hosting 17-20 teams each year and Central Platte's contest in Grand Island hosting 2 teams. He said the North Central and South Central regions have joined to become the Central Region and the contest will be held in Columbus. He said the winner of the regional contest will compete in the state contest to be held in Alda at the Crane Viewing Center.

Schultz reported that, due to financial problems at the national level, the Envirothon program has been transferred to the National Association of Conservation Districts Foundation and will be reorganized. He said poor management resulted in the cancellation of the national contest. He said Canon, the sponsor of the national contest, was no longer involved in the contest.

## ASSISTANT MANAGER'S REPORT

### Variance Committee

*Stevenson/Hickman*

Assistant General Manager Russell Callan reported that Jerry Hickman wanted to relinquish some surface water rights and convert it to groundwater use. He then wants to transfer it a few miles downstream and put it over some irrigation district water. Callan said the NRD wouldn't do anything with this request next month until the cooperators talked with the Farwell Irrigation District.

*Mattson Enterprises (Victor Rasmussen)*

Callan said that Victor Rasmussen wants to transfer some irrigated acres across the NRD boundary into Central Platte NRD. Callan said there are some history issues regarding the acres, but would provide more information to the Committee at next month's meeting.

Petersen said he would like more information on what is involved in selling water rights. Callan responded that the NRD does not have any part in the selling and buying of water rights; the landowners involved work up their own contract. The NRD deals with where the water is at, where the acres are at, and where the irrigation is going. He said acres can be transferred downstream within the same basin. Stream depletion factors are considered and irrigated history has to be proven.

Callan said the NRD also deals with acre rotation agreements in which a landowner can move acres to a different location for a certain amount of time, then return them to their original location. He said this is usually done with lease agreements. Koehlmoos said there is a date put in the rotation agreement that prevents pre-watering.

Koehlmoos said the Variance Committee can approve the transfer, deny the transfer, or condition the transfer. The first goal of a transfer request is to make sure the acres are eligible to be transferred under NRD rules and regulations criteria.

Koehlmoos said a title search is required for both parties and the acres are recorded on the land deed, per state statute.

Area 28 Activities

Callan reported that the NRD has received 93 flowmeter cost-share applications. Callan said that there were about 390 irrigation systems in Area 28, comprised of approximately 500 wells. Callan said that Mike Lorenz filled out the applications and sent them to each producer.

Callan said that 80% of the soil sample results were submitted by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Lorenz is contacting producers who still need to submit their reports. Callan said that nitrogen recommendations are being sent back to the producers based on the information received from the soil sample reports.

Environmental Trust Flowmeter/Soil Moisture Probe Grant

Water Modeling Coordinator Tylr Naprstek reported that the Lower Loup NRD applied for two Environmental Trust grants last September and was recently notified of their approval. He said the Irrigation Water Monitoring Program grant for flowmeter cost-share will allow the program to continue. It is a 3-year grant for cost-share on flowmeters in the District outside of Area 28. A flat cost-share rate of \$1,500 is provided to the landowners for the meter; they are responsible for

installation and other associated costs. To receive cost-share, the landowner must agree to allow NRD personnel access to the sites on a yearly basis to read the meters. Naprstek said he modified the grant request this time to add soil moisture sensors, similar to what NRCS is doing with their EQIP program. Naprstek said that \$49,400 was granted for Year 1; \$48,050 for Year 2; and \$57,050 for Year 3.

Naprstek said the NRD also received grant approval for a second year for the Pibel Lake Renovation Project. The grant was for \$140,000. He said Olsson Associates is supplying drawings for the sediment settling basin and outlet structures. NRD staff is working with Pibel Lake neighbors on getting access. Naprstek hopes construction will be started before this time next year. Koehlmoos said a 404 Corps of Engineers permit will need to be obtained.

Naprstek said a third ET grant for thermal imaging in the South Loup and Middle Loup Rivers was denied. He said staff will be meeting with USGS and Upper Loup NRD next week to determine where to go from here. Callan said the whole project would cost around \$95,000, and the NRD's part in the project was just a small part.

Gellermann asked how the NRD determines who gets flowmeters. Naprstek said that, at the present time, it's on a "first-come, first-served" basis. He said there is a waiting list of over 50 producers, and he hopes to take a look at where existing meters are and maybe fill in gaps with the new applications. Koehlmoos said the purpose of the meters is not only to get educational information to the producer and a tool to use in their application, but a requirement is that the landowner send the NRD the pumpage records which will then be put into the ELM model to show pumpage across the area. He said both the NRD and landowner can utilize information from the meter readings. Naprstek said he won't be accepting flowmeter applications until April, when the money is received.

#### Statewide Groundwater Monitoring Well Project

Naprstek reported that the NRD has monitoring wells distributed throughout the District. They are used for purposes of groundwater quantity/quality, pesticide sampling, age dating sampling in Area 28, and isotopes sampling. Some monitoring wells have long-term transducers that record water quantity measurements every 8 hours and others have hydrasleeves that are tested for nitrates/pesticides.

Naprstek gave a powerpoint presentation which showed a dedicated well monitoring site. His presentation also showed where the monitoring sites were located for the UNL real-time transducer, the NRD's pressure transducers, the NRD's dedicated groundwater monitoring wells, and the Sandhills transect survey wells. Koehlmoos said that UNL's Conservation & Survey Division put in 72 transect wells as part of the Sandhills Study in the late 70s and early 80s. He said there are 3 sets of transect wells located in Wheeler, Garfield and Boone Counties. Callan said the NRD monitors all of them.

Naprstek said that test-holes for dedicated well monitoring sites are drilled to the base of the aquifer and a hydrogeologist provides a lithologic description of the aquifer properties. He said that nested wells will then be tested for water quality/quantity at different depths of the aquifer. Walden asked about the meaning of "lithologic description." Naprstek answered that it is a drilling log describing what kind of material is coming out of the hole while the well is being drilled.

Naprstek said that the Lower Loup NRD will have four more wells drilled as part of the statewide monitoring well project – one in Custer County in the Broken Bow wellhead protection area; one in Valley County south of Davis Creek; and two in Boone County. These sites will be drilled in partnership with Conservation & Survey Division and DEQ, who will take care of the contracts, lithologic descriptions, and funding. The NRD was responsible for obtaining easements and gaining construction access. Callan said that the four new wells in the Lower Loup NRD would not have received funding from DEQ if Naprstek hadn't already had the easements obtained.

Naprstek reported that the NRD will be drilling four additional monitoring wells along the South Loup River Basin. Three easements have been obtained and Naprstek has a good lead on the fourth. He said he has mailed bid requests to drillers, with a March 7<sup>th</sup> deadline to submit a bid. He said the information obtained will transition well to several different studies with the South Loup River – thermal imagery, watershed basin study, and USGS real-time monitoring at two sites.

Amsberry asked if monitoring information is shared among the agencies involved. Callan said the NRD can access that information. He said the shallow lagoon wells are part of DEQ's clearinghouse information. Koehlmoos said the NRD supplies well information to the statewide database. Other NRDs, Conservation & Survey Division, and UNL also submit information to the database. He said DNR is developing a site that will have information on stream gauges.

#### ELM Update

Callan reported that USGS is working on the final report.

### MANAGER'S REPORT

#### Director Election Filings

Koehlmoos reported that all incumbents on the Lower Loup NRD Board had filed for re-election and there were no challengers to any of the seats. He noted that, because of redistricting, Tom Knutson had filed for Subdistrict 5 and Dick Hadenfeldt filed for the At-Large seat.

#### Legislation

Koehlmoos said that the NRD is keeping a close eye on LB-1074 regarding changing provisions relating to the regulation of groundwater. He said Senator Lathrop wants to get some things done that he wants to see on a statewide level to qualify NRDs for some of the funding bills that are going in. He said those bills include LB-1046 which includes \$50M over a 20-year period for water sustainability projects; LB-940 which includes another \$50M to catch up on some the Resources Development Fund obligations; and LB-1098 which is a recommendation from the Water Funding Task Force to expand the Natural Resources Commission from 16 to 27 members.

#### New Hires

Koehlmoos said there were no new hires.

## NARD REPORT

### Director's Report

Rasmussen said that the NARD Board met at the Legislative Conference last month. He said there will be a 4% increase in dues, and reported that the insurance and risk pool look good. He said there won't be action on the budget until March and election of officers. Rasmussen said he attended a couple good sessions entitled, "Conflict of Interest" and "Understanding Nebraska Open Meetings." He said he was disappointed in the session he moderated, entitled, "Water Quality from the South Platte Flood."

### NARD Washington, DC Conference

Schulz said that tickets were bought and reservations made. Koehlmoos said four directors and two staff would be attending.

## NRC REPORT

### Commissioner's Report

Knutson reported that the Natural Resources Commission met in Lincoln at the Legislative Conference. He said there was a lot of discussion on the Wanahoo Project and its funding. He said Bev Donaldson was selected as the new chairperson for next year. Knutson accepted the chairperson seat for the programs committee. Knutson said he testified on LB-1098, which is a bill that would change the composition of the Natural Resources Commission. He said there is a lot of support for that bill. Knutson said that there were several committee members who were very interested in the development of a state river basin water plan

## RC&D REPORTS

### Loup Basin RC&D

Rasmussen told the Board that Loup Basin RC&D met at the winery in Scotia. He said the RC&D received a \$65,000 grant to fund *Keep Loup Basin Beautiful*. He said the program for the Chalk Mines fundraiser was very good and nearly \$4,000 in donations was received.

### PrairieLand RC&D

Gellermann reported that the Shell Creek Watershed Plan received funding and several members of the RC&D attended a meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup> to hear an update on the plan and give input. He said that the watershed encompasses land from Newman Grove to Schuyler, but includes 20,000 acres in the Lower Loup NRD. Gellermann told directors to let him know if there were any communities within the RC&D that wanted to host a tire collection.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Koehlmoos announced that the next Water Resources Committee meeting is planned for March 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at the Headquarters office. The Programs/Projects Committee will meet March 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m., possibly in the new facilities at the Aagaard Farm.

Schultz said the last day of the 2014 legislative session would be April 17<sup>th</sup>.

## ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Kruse declared the meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Roster for attendance of this meeting and tally of votes cast on motions at this meeting are being filed with the official minutes of this meeting at the Lower Loup Natural Resources District's Headquarters Office, 2620 Airport Drive, Ord, Nebraska. Publication notification of this meeting was made via a newspaper in each county within the District. The next Board of Directors meeting will be held Thursday, March 27, 2014, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

---

Darwin B. Anderson  
Secretary